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*For Immediate Release*

*Media Update: Grand Opening This Thursday*

***Rescue Mission's Bethel Village Creates Safe Home for Women and Mothers with children***

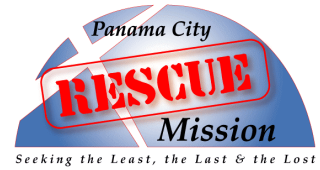
**Springfield-** Angela and her two boys, ages 8 and 11, were evicted from their home and found themselves at the Rescue Mission seeking help. It was clear her 10-year addiction to painkillers and alcohol had finally caught up to her.

When she sought help through the state, it was decided the best interest of the boys would be to live with their father. Angela had neglected them for too long it seemed and they were ready to get serious about the situation.

What she found at Bethel Village was a stable home, structured classes and an opportunity to learn about addictions, parenting and the Lord. Three weeks later, she admits that she still thinks about drugs, but "the structure helps keep my mind off it."

The Mission had experienced a growing numbers of homeless women and families at the emergency shelter on Allen Street. In May, 2004, property was purchased that would become a safe haven for women and children who have lost their homes due to unfortunate circumstances. Since then, groups have donated time and resources to convert the home on six acres for women and mothers with children. It was opened in July.

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Three bedrooms are designated for single women and their children while a dorm room is designated for up to seven single women. Current plans are to establish a child development center that will provide day care and educational classes.

Betty Ball, Bethel Village Director said “Once this development center is complete, we will have resources to assist in reuniting the ladies with their children, that way the children will be able to join their mothers at Bethel and they can grow together.”

Angela already senses a change in her life and knows what’s been keeping her in the program. “I’ve been asking God everyday to heal my body from the chemicals. I feel better physically and mentally and can start to work the pieces of my life back together . . . one day at a time.”

Ball and Angela’s other caseworkers have developed a plan for reuniting with her boys. Meanwhile, they are allowed supervised visits. “They keep asking when we can be together again. I tell them I’m working on it.”

Up to 20 clients may eventually be enrolled in the program at one time where they will perform daily job tasks at the Mission, participate in small group classes and take Bible study hosted by local churches.

“It’s hard, but you have to choose. It’s either going back into the pit of homelessness or choosing to get better,” Angela said. “My kids know Mama’s getting better.”

The Mission is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization that does not accept governmental funds. Tax-deductible donations designated to the Village may be sent to Panama City Rescue Mission at P.O. Box 2359 Panama City, FL 32401.

Thursday at 6 pm, the Mission will hold a Grand Opening and Reception. All media is welcome to attend. Call 215-9007 for more information.